United Nations S/PV.7643

Security Council

Seventy-first year

Provisional

7643rd meeting
Friday, 11 March 2016, 3 p.m.
New York

President:	Mr. Gaspar Martins	(Angola)
Members:	China	Mr. Shen Bo
	Egypt	Mr. Aboulatta
	France	Mr. Delattre
	Japan	Mr. Yoshikawa
	Malaysia	Mr. Ibrahim
	New Zealand	Mrs. Schwalger
	Russian Federation	Mr. Iliichev
	Senegal	Mr. Seck
	Spain	Mr. Oyarzun Marchesi
	Ukraine	Mr. Vitrenko
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Rycroft
	United States of America	Ms. Power
	Uruguay	Mr. Bermúdez
	Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)	Mr. Ramírez Carreño

Agenda

United Nations peacekeeping operations

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16-06801 (E)

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The meeting was called to order at 3.10 p.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

United Nations peacekeeping operations

The President: The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

Members of the Council have before them document S/2016/235, which contains the text of a draft resolution submitted by the United States of America.

Members of the Council also have before them document S/2016/239, which contains a proposed amendment submitted by Egypt to the draft resolution contained in document S/2016/235.

The Council is ready to proceed to the vote on the draft resolution contained in document S/2016/235 and on the proposed amendment contained in document S/2016/239.

Members of the Council have before them the proposed amendment submitted by Egypt contained in document S/2016/239. Rule 36 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure stipulates, inter alia, the following:

> "when an amendment adds to or deletes from the text of a motion or draft resolution, that amendment shall be voted on first."

Accordingly, I intend to put the proposed amendment to the vote now.

I shall first call on those members of the Council who wish to make statements before the voting on the proposed amendment.

Mr. Aboulatta (Egypt) (*spoke in Arabic*): Egypt is proposing an amendment to paragraph 2 of the draft resolution (S/2016/235) that has been submitted to the Security Council. This is the paragraph that details the conditions under which a contingent would be repatriated in the case of an allegation of sexual exploitation and abuse. The amendment consists of a slight modification to the language in the paragraph, to be put to a separate vote. The original language proposed by the United States delegation would allow taking arbitrary and unobjective decisions amounting to collective punishment against hundreds of peacekeeping personnel. That would undoubtedly have severe and negative impacts on the morale of personnel and tarnish the reputation of troop-contributing countries.

Our proposed amendment is aimed at addressing that loophole in the draft resolution by specifying the conditions that would have to be met in order to take action with regard to an entire contingent. Those three conditions are: a failure by the troop-contributing country to investigate allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse; a failure by the troop-contributing country to punish those guilty of sexual exploitation and abuse; and a failure by the troop-contributing country to inform the Secretary-General of the measures taken against those who commit acts of sexual exploitation and abuse.

Ms. Power (United States of America): The United States will vote against the proposed amendment put forward by Egypt for a simple, stark reason, that is, the amendment would undermine the purpose of the draft resolution (S/2016/235). Our draft resolution does not dictate how any Member State should go about investigating allegations or punishing those perpetrators found within their own systems to be guilty. But it does clearly state — finally — that there would be real consequences if the concerned troop- or police-contributing country failed to credibly respond to the allegations against its personnel. Under the draft resolution, a non-response is simply not an option. Our draft resolution outlines broad, objective criteria for troop- and police-contributing countries to satisfy, as appropriate, in the event that their personnel are the subject of an allegation or allegations. Those criteria relate to countries not taking any of the following steps, namely, not investigating an allegation or allegations, not holding accountable somebody who has been found to be a perpetrator, or not informing the Secretary-General of the actions that the State has undertaken. In the draft resolution, which will come up for a vote shortly, the failure to do any one of those things should trigger the replacement provision set out in paragraph 2 of the draft resolution owing to non-response.

Please hear me out on this issue: by merely inserting a very simple word — one of the most often-used words in the English language, "and" — the amendment proposed by Egypt stipulates that all three conditions must be met prior to triggering that provision. For example, under the Egyptian provision, if a country merely sends a letter to the Secretary-General, after receiving an allegation or allegations, that it has chosen not to investigate, giving no reason, but informing the

Secretary-General according to that provision, and if it does nothing else, it would be in compliance with the draft resolution as amended by Egypt. That would be enough. If a Member State investigated and determined that an individual committed an act of sexual abuse and exploitation but does not hold the perpetrator accountable, it would actually be in compliance with the draft resolution as Egypt would have it amended.

With the proposed Egyptian amendment, there would be no cost either for non-response or for uninvestigated, unaccountable criminal behaviour. That undermines the purpose of today's draft resolution, which is to get countries to respond to credible allegations against their personnel and to change a system that is not working. It is to move away from talking about zero tolerance to actually having a provision that puts in place consequences that incentivize the kinds of actions that every member of the Security Council, including Egypt, has said it supports.

For that reason, we will vote against the proposed Egyptian amendment. As a Council, we often demand that perpetrators be held accountable, and no one has said before that the Council is acting in contravention of the presumption of innocence. That is not what we are doing. In that regard, again, Member States will have the authority within their own systems to determine how to pursue an investigation, whether a guilty finding is appropriate and what will be the means of accountability that they put in place. But it cannot be the case that simply sending a note to the Secretary-General after allegations of such gravity are brought is enough to dispense with a State's obligations under the draft resolution.

My last point is that we in the United States are vehemently opposed to collective punishment. I think that everyone on the Council is totally united on that. We oppose the stigma that is placed on whole units serving honourably when single individuals are alleged to have committed crimes of the magnitude we are talking about. But what is causing collective punishment, collective guilt and stigmas — not just for a unit, but for the United Nations as a whole and for its missions — is the failure to establish individual responsibility. The collective gets the blame when the individual is not held accountable, and Egypt's proposed amendment would make it less likely that we would see individual responsibility.

The President: I shall now put to the vote the proposed amendment contained in document S/2016/239.

A vote was taken by show of hands.

In favour:
Angola, China, Egypt, Russian Federation, Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)

Against:
France, Japan, Malaysia, New Zealand, Spain, Ukraine, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America, Uruguay

Abstaining:
Senegal

The President: The result of the voting is as follows: 5 votes in favour, 9 against and 1 abstention. The amendment has not been adopted, it having failed to obtain the required number of votes.

The Council is ready to proceed to the vote on the draft resolution before it. I shall put the draft resolution to the vote now.

A vote was taken by show of hands.

In favour:
Angola, China, France, Japan, Malaysia, New Zealand, Russian Federation, Senegal, Spain, Ukraine, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America, Uruguay and Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)

Abstaining:
Egypt

The President: The result of the voting is as follows: 14 votes in favour, none against and 1 abstention. The draft resolution has been adopted as resolution 2272 (2016).

I shall now give the floor to those members of the Council who wish to make statements following the voting.

Mr. Aboulatta (Egypt) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I would like to express my unequivocal condemnation of all crimes of sexual exploitation and abuse and to emphasize that States must take all the measures necessary to combat and eradicate such crimes as a deterrent to potential offenders. I would also like to stress how important it is that every effort

be made to assist the victims of such crimes, in line with the compliance of Egypt and every other State Member of the United Nations with our zero-tolerance policy.

The Egyptian delegation chose not to vote against today's resolution 2272 (2016) out of our sincere belief in the importance of many of its provisions, which are designed to deal with repeated cases of sexual exploitation and abuse in peacekeeping operations. Despite the unilateral approach to the negotiations on the draft resolution, we have chosen not to vote against it. Throughout the negotiations and during yesterday's briefing on the subject (see S/PV.7642), my delegation has consistently pointed to the need to differentiate between, on the one hand, condemning and combating sexual exploitation and abuse and, on the other, tarring entire States and the troops they contribute with the same brush. The way that peacekeeping troops and troop-contributing countries (TCCs) have been libelled is completely unacceptable. It has a drastic and negative effect on the troops' morale and demonstrates contempt for the sacrifices of tens of thousands of peacekeeping personnel operating under extremely difficult conditions.

The Security Council has chosen to act on an issue outside its purview, since conduct and discipline, including in relation to sexual exploitation and abuse, are matters that are at the very core of the competence of the General Assembly. All States Members of the United Nations are represented in the General Assembly, including the TCCs. Therefore, taking action on this matter in the Security Council rather than in the General Assembly illustrates ulterior motives aimed at capitalizing on the fact the major troop-contributing countries are absent from this organ, in order to adopt a resolution that never would have been adopted in the organ designated with responsibility to confront sexual abuse and exploitation. It would have been more appropriate if United Nations bodies had focused on addressing the root causes of the problem by providing sufficient predeployment training to peacekeeping forces, ensuring the separation of United Nations camps from the local population, avoiding prolonged rotation and providing adequate living conditions, among other things.

The Security Council resolution could give some the impression that sexual exploitation and abuse are being used to bring pressure to bear on TCCs in response to their legitimate demands regarding improving the conditions of troops and their efforts to contribute more effectively to establishing peacekeeping operations and drafting the mandates of operations in partnership with the Security Council.

Mr. Rycroft (United Kingdom): The United Kingdom welcomes the adoption of resolution 2272 (2016) today. I pay tribute to Samantha for her determination and courage in bringing this difficult issue to the Security Council.

Like so many in the chamber yesterday, I was appalled by the sickening crimes detailed in our meeting (see S/PV.7642) on the report of the Secretary-General (S/2016/729). Alhough I was shocked, sadly I cannot say that I was surprised. Horrific allegations against peacekeepers have surfaced almost every year for over two decades — in Bosnia and Herzegovina, in Côte d'Ivoire, in Haiti, in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and now in the Central African Republic. The most harrowing abuse demands the most steadfast response. Each and every victim could tell us that for too long our response has fallen short. Today I hope that finally we have turned the page and begun to make amends. We cannot be having this discussion again — not in 20 years' time, not in one year's time. What we need now is swift and systematic implementation of this resolution, implementation that brings justice for the victims and ends the sickening cycle of impunity. This is not about collective punishmen., nor about penalizing the many for the sick acts of the few. This is about taking serious action in the face of serious allegations, about acting decisively against any pattern of abuse in any part of the world.

It is deeply regrettable that there was no unanimity and that there was an attempt to weaken the resolution through a draft amendment. What does that say to the victims, the women and girls whom we heard so poignantly about yesterday, that some members of this Council would seek to weaken our response, rather than endorse meaningful action? The United Kingdom voted against the draft amendment because not holding perpetrators accountable is unacceptable. Had the draft amendment succeeded, the Secretary-General would not have had a lever to apply pressure for accountability.

I want to conclude with the words of a teenage girl from Bangui. Speaking to a journalist earlier this year, she said:

> "Sometimes when I am alone with my baby I think about killing him. He reminds me of the man who raped me." (*The Washington Post, 27 February 2016*)

Those are difficult words to read in the Council, but this is the reality of sexual exploitation and abuse. It is a reality created by a peacekeeper who was entrusted to help, not harm, that teenage girl. It is a reality that we simply cannot shy away from. We must confront it and we must end it. This resolution today is a vital step towards doing so.

Mr. Iliichev (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): Russia backed the adoption of resolution 2272 (2016), on sexual exploitation and abuse in peacekeeping operations. We approached with understanding the initiative of the United States and other States' delegations to send a signal through the Security Council regarding the unacceptability of such actions. We decisively condemn such crimes and deem it necessary to strengthen peacekeepers' responsibility for sexual exploitation and abuse.

During the course of intensive negotiations, we were able to craft a text that expanded preventive measures and the fight against this phenomenon, not only to the United Nations but also other missions deployed with Security Council consent. However, we believe it is important to underscore once again that we cannot accept attempts to exclude national peacekeeping contingents enjoying the Security Council's mandate from responsibility for the commission of sexual exploitation and abuse. This is all the more true as recently there has been a significant number of cases that clearly point to the fact that such crimes were committed by just such contingents of foreign missions.

At a time when the majority of United Nations contingents that are focused on in this resolution are represented by countries of Asia and Africa, it seems the military personnel of Western countries would like to enjoy immunity from prosecution for such actions. This is fraught with the risk of undermining the effectiveness of actions undertaken to fight this evil and could also have an impact on the standing of the international Organization. It could also become a time bomb for the peacekeeping work of the United Nations. Russia hopes that the Secretary-General will use the authority he possesses pursuant to this resolution to ensure that there is transparent and objective investigation of existing cases and the punishment of the guilty in all cases, without exception, regardless of the country of nationality of the perpetrator.

We view the adoption by the Security Council of the resolution today as an exception to the rule. We continue to believe that the issue of the discipline of peacekeepers is not related to the maintenance of international peace and security. For many years these problems have been discussed in various bodies of the General Assembly — for example, the Secretary-General submits his relevant reports to the General Assembly. We strongly support the continuation of this established practice, which has proven to be effective.

We would like to underscore that we are concerned by the fact that the sponsors of the resolution ignored the logical and wise amendments that were proposed by Egypt and were backed by troop-contributing countries (TCCs). This is a case in which the view of the troop-contributing countries must be heard and must be included in the work on Security Council resolutions. We believe it is wrong to pit the Council up against the General Assembly and, even worse, against TCCs.

Mr. Shen Bo (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): United Nations peacekeeping operations have made great contributions to the maintenance of international peace and security, but a very small number of peacekeepers are suspected of acts of sexual exploitation and abuse, acts that undermine the image and the reputation of United Nations peacekeeping operations and the United Nations as a whole. China supports Secretary-General Ban ki-Moon and the Secretariat in adopting the zero-tolerance policy, supports the international community in taking comprehensive response measures and supports the Council in playing a proper role in this regard, including stepping up coordination with the General Assembly and other United Nations bodies.

China therefore voted in favour of resolution 2272 (2016). The sexual exploitation and abuse problem involves troop-contributing countries. The Council should fully hear and heed the views of the troop-contributing countries. We believe that the Security Council should have had ample time for further consultation to maximize our efforts to seek agreement and forge consensus to the largest extent possible.

Mr. Delattre (France) (*spoke in French*): France voted in favour of resolution 2272 (2016), prepared by the United States Mission, a resolution that strengthens the fight against sexual abuse in peacekeeping operations.

We believe that the fight against sexual abuse is an absolute imperative, both moral and political, and deserves the Council's full attention as an interlinked complement to the work undertaken by the General Assembly on these issues. At stake are not only our most fundamental values but also the reputation and effectiveness of peacekeeping operations personnel. Sexual abuse cannot and should no longer be treated as a simple disciplinary or behavioural problem and tackled at the administrative level. The United Nations had to provide a political and operational response to the allegations made and confirmed cases by providing clear guidelines to commanders and troops deployed on the ground. The goal is to strengthen the fight against sexual abuse not only within peacekeeping operations but also when committed by forces that are not under the command of the United Nations but contribute to such operations.

Unfortunately, today peacekeeping operations account for 70 per cent of the allegations of sexual abuse within the United Nations system. At a time when the Secretary-General is undertaking determined action, the Council's support is indispensable.

Let us recall once again that sexual abuse is unacceptable, regardless of the perpetrator or source of these actions — military, police, civilian personnel, United Nations or non-United Nations. The colour of the helmet or uniform means little to the victims. The resolution allows us to send a clear message to all actors: Blue Helmets, police, civilian personnel and international forces. We must do our utmost to translate into reality the zero-tolerance objective, which must serve more than ever before as our compass and our shared obligation.

France, which contributes to peacekeeping operations, has consistently during the negotiation process supported this broad-based approach, which sends a strong message to all players. I should note, however, that we do not intend here to collectively stigmatize the soldiers who bravely fight for our Organization's ideals; that is not, and will never be, our intention. This issue is too important for us not to all mobilize in a collective spirit of goodwill. Everyone must feel heeded. This is why an in-depth, inclusive dialogue with the troop-contributing countries is so important, for the sake of efficiency, in order to achieve the result that we all wish to see. It is vital for everyone to take ownership of the zero-tolerance objective to which I have just referred.

We must meet this challenge. Our collective action will serve as the best possible reply to the Secretary-General's call and, of course, to the victims. Rest assured that France's determination in this respect is absolute, both nationally and in the framework of the United Nations. France will spare no effort in supporting the Secretary-General's efforts aimed at strengthening our policy of zero tolerance for sexual abuse.

I should like to conclude by once again paying heartfelt tribute to all of the soldiers who are working for the maintenance of peace and to their invaluable contribution.

Ms. Power (United States of America): On behalf of the United States, I should like sincerely to thank those countries that voted in favour of resolution 2272 (2016), which was adopted today. The resolution underscores the Security Council's responsibility — our responsibility — to address the scourge of sexual exploitation and abuse in United Nations peacekeeping, which has been allowed to persist for far too long. Impunity for such abuses clearly undermines our efforts to promote international peace and security. The resolution makes clear that it is our job to ensure that there is accountability when men, women and children are abused by the Blue Helmets whom the Council has sent to protect them.

The resolution signals the Security Council's strong support for the zero-tolerance policy of the United Nations and for the ongoing efforts by the Secretary-General to strengthen this institution's response, reporting and remedial measures to prevent and combat sexual exploitation and abuse among United Nations peacekeepers. The resolution underscores the fact that peacekeepers found guilty — not those accused, those found guilty — of committing sexual exploitation and abuse do not deserve to serve in United Nations peacekeeping missions, and sends a clear message to troop- and police-contributing countries that fail to take action to prevent or punish credible allegations of sexual abuse and exploitation, as well as to all States Members of the United Nations and to United Nations bodies, to ensure that these investigations are carried out thoroughly, promptly and impartially.

I should also like to echo my French colleague's comment that the colour of the helmet means little to the victim. All of us, wherever we serve, whether we wear a blue or a green or some other colour helmet, have a responsibility to live up to the standards that

this resolution tries to enshrine. All of us have a responsibility with respect to individuals who serve us overseas, in the same way that we have a responsibility within our own borders to ensure that these kinds of crimes are never carried out and that when they are carried out the perpetrators are held accountable.

The resolution adopted today endorses the decision of the Secretary-General to repatriate United Nations peacekeeping units that demonstrate widespread or systemic sexual abuse and exploitation, and it requests that the Secretary-General repatriate all uniformed personnel from a contributing country in a given mission if that country fails to take appropriate steps to address credible allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse, fails to hold the perpetrators accountable or fails to inform the Secretary-General of the status of such efforts.

I should like, if I could, to respond to Egypt's intervention. We were accused, implicitly, politely, of having an ulterior motive. I confess that I do have an ulterior motive. My ulterior motive is actually, finally, to do something about a cancer: the cancer of sexual exploitation and abuse against people who trust the United Nations flag. They see a peacekeeper coming their way and they think, this is someone who is going to help me; they do not think, I have to run, this is someone who is going to rape me. That is not what they think. That is not what they should ever think; but that is what they are going to think, and that is with some of them do think, because there is not accountability for the crimes committed that is in any way commensurate with what appears to be the scale of this problem.

So that is my ulterior motive, I confess. Sue me. I also take note of the very important comment that Egypt made, of the admission that the measures contained in the resolution — measures requiring accountability — would not have been passed by the General Assembly. We agree; the General Assembly has been totally paralysed. There are countries within the negotiations that are going on as we speak that have tried to water down the recommendations that the Secretary-General has made. It would be one thing if we were succeeding, if the system was working. We come in here every day; we lament, we condemn. We condemn the abuse and we condemn the lack of accountability, and then we go to the General Assembly and some of us try to water down provisions to try to strengthen the system. What is up with that? One cannot simultaneously try to water something down in the General Assembly and then complain when the body that sends peacekeepers out to try to protect people actually takes responsibility for the fact that some of those who were supposed to do the protecting are committing sexual abuse. We cannot have it both ways.

If the General Assembly had been able to actually put in place methods for accountability, if the system were working for girls like the ones Matthew just quoted, who are now left with the children of the people who have come and raped them and then gone back to their countries never having been held accountable — if the system had prevented these kinds of acts, or least had some kind of accountability, we would not be having this conversation. We are here only because it just keeps happening.

So I think that it is very, very strange to hear Member States call on the one hand for more aggressive action or more accountability and then try to punt the issue to a body that for years has been unable to come to a consensus; and with several countries, again including countries on the Council, trying to water down what happens in the General Assembly, no reasonable person could expect a different result.

Let me conclude with two messages. To the tens of thousands of troops and police who serve honourably in United Nations peacekeeping operations, we salute them unequivocally for putting their lives on the line, with little fanfare or recognition, for people who live in countries far from their own. We and the civilians that they protect with their bravery are completely indebted to them for their service. As I did yesterday (see S/PV.7642), I would single out those members of the Council that have contributed so many peacekeepers, including Egypt, Senegal, China, Uruguay and, of course, the United Kingdom, which is becoming involved again. As a country that does not contribute a lot of troops, we are in awe of their service. To the victims of sexual exploitation and abuse by United Nations peacekeepers, we pledge that we will do better. We will do better to ensure that the Blue Helmets we send as their protectors will not become perpetrators. That is what we are striving for. But if they do, this resolution demands that we, the Council, ensure that the people who commit such violations, who violate the good name of the United Nations and the good names of their countries, be held accountable.

Mr. Ramírez Carreño (Venezuela) (*spoke in Spanish*): The Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela voted in favour of resolution 2272 (2016), for we are convinced that acts of sexual exploitation and abuse committed by any foreign force or military, police or civilian personnel participating in United Nations peacekeeping operations or special political missions must be categorically rejected. No one can justify such cowardly and absolutely reprehensible crimes. All those responsible should be punished. In that regard, we reiterate our support for the Secretary-General's zero-tolerance policy.

As we stated during the briefing yesterday (see S/PV.7642), this is not an issue of an exclusively disciplinary nature; these are reprehensible acts that contradict and undermine the purposes and principles of the United Nations for which peacekeeping missions are established. In situations of armed conflict, such acts could constitute violations of international humanitarian law and international human rights law. The United Nations should be an example of consistency, firmness and high moral and ethical commitment with regard to the importance of preventing these acts and, above all, with regard to the accountability of any such personnel authorized by the Security Council that commits this type of crime.

Most of the interventions made yesterday stressed how important it was that the discussion and actions to be taken within the Council on this sensitive issue entaild close and organic coordination with other bodies with competence in the matter, namely, the General Assembly, in particular through its Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations. We want to insist on that point. The spirit of cooperation should prevail among the various organs of the United Nations. It is very dangerous for the Security Council to assume the powers of other bodies on the grounds of the latter's inaction. There should be mutual support since, by that same reasoning, other organs of the United Nations could take into their own hands the matters that fall within the competence of the Security Council, but which it has not been able to resolve in 25 or 60 years, and for which the inhabitants in the territories affected, for example, have been calling for more direct action by some organ of the Organization.

We also recognize that the scope of the resolution adopted today was improved by the incorporation of several proposals — for instance, in addition to peacekeeping missions, including also forces outside the Organization, which seems to us very important in order to be consistent with the idea of zero tolerance. However, as always, we would have wished for a more comprehensive and inclusive process in the discussion of this important resolution. This has become a recurring problem in the Security Council. In this spirit, we voted in favour of the proposed amendment submitted by the delegation of Egypt to paragraph 2, because we believe that it gives a sense of balance to the provisions therein and would preclude any arbitrary actions that could be committed against troop-contributing countries. We would have wished as well that all members of the Council could have agreed on it without it having to be put to a vote. We recall that the unity of the Council demands that the views of its members be duly taken into account to the extent possible in the formulation of proposals.

To avoid deficiencies, fragmented and bureaucratic responses to these cases, which the Organization has suffered from in the past, it is essential that the Council's decisions be guided by the principles of objectivity, non-selectivity and impartiality, and that the mechanisms and frequency of dialogue and coordination with countries that contribute military, police and civilian personnel be improved with a view to examining and discussing this issue, and to advancing concerted actions that have greater impact on prevention and the fight against impunity. With this resolution, the Security Council has taken up the flag in the fight against this type of act and is obliged to coordinate with troop-contributing countries.

Finally, we believe that it is not a question of stigmatizing countries, but rather a question of delivering justice. We therefore insist on the need to fully implement Article 44 of the Charter of the United Nations, which establishes the requirement to invite troop-contributing countries to participate, in an active and binding manner, in the decision-making process with regard to the deployment of troops in peacekeeping missions. That has never really been operational. That single action could help enormously to prevent and punish this type of reprehensible and despicable crime.

In conclusion, having adopted this resolution, we hope that we will never again have to discuss abuses against women, children and the most vulnerable groups in armed conflict.

Mr. Vitrenko (Ukraine): Ukraine welcomes the adoption of resolution 2272 (2016), which we consider

to be a milestone document. We commend the United States delegation for its leadership in that regard.

During yesterday's debate (see S/PV.7642), the lack of sufficient progress in the fight against sexual exploitation and abuse in the past decade was acknowledged by almost all delegations. Unfortunately, the number of allegations has not diminished. The crimes committed today are as appalling as they were years ago. We believe that the Security Council is uniquely positioned to send a strong message to confront this problem. That is why we fully supported the adoption of today's resolution. We hope that the document we have adopted will serve as a clear signal to all parties concerned that the Security Council stands for the pressing need to implement a more assertive approach in order to address the scourge of sexual exploitation and abuse promptly.

As an active troop- and police-contributing country, Ukraine reaffirms its determination to effectively contribute to the fight against sexual exploitation and abuse, to engage with all stakeholders and to implement the necessary steps and mechanisms, including those envisaged in today's resolution.

Mr. Ibrahim (Malaysia): Malaysia supports resolution 2272 (2016), which the Council just adopted. It sends an unambiguous message that the Security Council, the United Nations and the international community will not tolerate sexual exploitation and abuse by peacekeepers. We have repeatedly called for zero tolerance in that regard, and today we have strengthened our resolve on the matter. We support many of the strong measures initiated by the Secretary-General to strengthen accountability for perpetrators of abuse, as set out in resolution 2272 (2016). Malaysia firmly believes that peacekeepers must uphold the highest standards of professionalism and moral values, as they are mandated to protect civilians, and to uphold international humanitarian law and human rights law while serving in areas of conflict.

In our view, the provisions on the repatriation of contingents that demonstrate widespread and systematic sexual exploitation and abuse or non-response to allegations of misconduct are wholly justified. In that regard, we note that the route leading towards a decision on possible repatriation must come with clear and transparent criteria and guidelines, developed in full consultation and engagement with the concerned troop-contributing countries throughout the process. In the spirit of renewing and re-energizing the United Nations peacekeeping institutions, we would also stress the importance of trilateral consultations among the Council, troop-contributing countries and the Secretariat.

We regret the missed opportunity to rally consensus around such an important resolution. We believe that the rationale to address sensitivities surrounding this issue warrant, at this time, engaging the concerned stakeholders, namely, the troop-contributing countries. As mentioned by many delegations yesterday (see S/PV.7642), combatting sexual exploitation and abuse requires the collective efforts of all members of the United Nations and the international community. We hope that resolution 2272 (2016) creates the intended momentum to end impunity for sexual exploitation and abuse by peacekeepers.

Mr. Oyarzun Marchesi (Spain) (*spoke in Spanish*): Spain thanks the United States for this important initiative.

We have just adopted resolution 2272 (2016), the first to address exclusively conduct deemed completely unacceptable. With this resolution, the Security Council is sending a strong message to all who have the responsibility to eliminate this scourge, and that responsibility is collective. My delegation supported the text put forward in its entirety and without amendment, because quite simply we cannot address the issue of accountability in a partial manner. The reason for that is obvious. Our aim is not to repatriate contingents, but to protect the victims and prevent the repetition of aggressive acts. It is therefore necessary to investigate such matters as soon as possible or inform the Secretary-General of the measures taken. The perpetrators must be brought to justice and serve their sentences. All of that is first and foremost the responsibility of the troop- and police contributing countries, precisely because we do not want the work of a contingent to be tarnished by the actions of some of its members. Let us ensure that we all assume our responsibility.

Mr. Seck (Senegal) (*spoke in French*): I thank the United States delegation for having taken the initiative of submitting to the Security Council the text of resolution 2272 (2016), which we have just adopted, concerning cases of sexual exploitation and abuse committed by United Nations peacekeeping personnel and external forces authorized by the Council.

As a troop- and police-contributing country and in accordance with its international commitments to peacekeeping and respect for international humanitarian law and international human rights law, Senegal naturally voted in favour of the resolution. The delegation of Senegal participated actively in the negotiations in a constructive spirit and accordingly proposed amendments aimed at making the text clearer with a view to ensuring that innocent parties do not fall victim to collective punishment for crimes that are a matter of individual responsibility. The delegation of Senegal would have therefore liked the resolution to take into account the sometimes difficult situations faced by States concerned with regard to carrying out investigations and enquiries.

My delegation regrets that several of the concerns we voiced with a view to making the text more balanced were not reflected in the resolution. However, Senegal's commitment to the zero-zolerance policy called for by the Secretary-General remains absolute, given that the fight against impunity must remain a collective and universal exigency.

Mrs. Schwalger (New Zealand): New Zealand voted in favour of resolution 2272 (2016) because of the clear and pressing need for more robust action to combat sexual exploitation and abuse. New Zealand respects the sacrifice and commends the meaningful contribution of the vast majority of United Nations peacekeepers. The measures in this resolution support the Secretary-General's efforts with respect to sexual exploitation and abuse, in particular to address the systemic failure represented by the ongoing allegations.

The past 10 years, and especially this past year, have demonstrated that the status quo is neither working nor acceptable. The Security Council has a responsibility to act on sexual exploitation and abuse and address the negative consequences of the peacekeeping operations that we members of the Council mandate, including to implement the standards we have all agreed. We encourage all partners to work together going forward. Only our close cooperation to implement zero tolerance and build capacity, with a real investment of political will, can make the difference that is so desperately needed for the victims, United Nations peacekeeping, and the credibility of the Organization.

Mr. Yoshikawa (Japan): Japan voted in favour of resolution 2272 (2016), proposed by the United States. Since we spoke on our views on sexual exploitation and abuse in the Chamber yesterday (see S/PV.7642), I wish to emphasize only one point, which is why we think that this resolution is important and necessary.

Japan supports the Secretary-General's decision to repatriate contingents when there is a demonstrated pattern of misconduct. That measure is aimed not at pointing a finger at contingents, but at protecting civilians where peacekeepers are deployed. Its purpose is also to urge troop- and police-contributing countries to take action. We need to realize that investigating allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse is the primary responsibility of troop- and police-contributing countries, and they have to take appropriate actions against the allegations and hold personnel accountable for sexual exploitation and abuse.

In doing so, the United Nations will ensure that its peacekeepers, who are sometimes the last hope for people suffering in conflicts, are deployed to protect people. By taking the appropriate actions, they can also preserve the honour of the vast majority of peacekeepers from Africa, the Asia-Pacific, Latin America and the Caribbean, and Europe, including my own country, Japan, which are fulfilling their tasks seriously in difficult circumstances. It is our belief that resolution 2272 (2016) will send a clear message that the Security Council fully supports the zero-tolerance policy called for by the Secretary-General.

Mr. Bermudez (Uruguay) (*spoke in Spanish*): Uruguay wishes to express its satisfaction for the adoption earlier in this meeting of resolution 2272 (2016). At the outset, we want to thank the United States for its timely initiative. Uruguay is very pleased to join the rest of the Council in their agreement that dealing with this problem can no longer be postponed.

With regard to the content of the resolution, which is in line with the concept of zero tolerance, in our dual capacity as a member of the Security Council and a troop-contributing country, we believe that, although the text could be further improved, given the sensitivity of the issue, it nonetheless has important provisions for combating such reprehensible acts, which, as was said in yesterday's meeting on the subject (see S/PV.7642), affect not only the image and credibility of United Nations peacekeeping operations but, above all, have an impact on the dignity of the victims who suffer, often irreversibly, from their consequences. For all of those reasons, therefore, Uruguay voted in favour of the resolution.

Lastly, we would like to reiterate that all staff who are part of United Nations peacekeeping operations, whether military, police or civilian components, just like all personnel in other operations authorized by the Security Council, must be held accountable for their actions.

The meeting rose at 4.10 p.m.